

Board Member Candidate Overview (Updated: Summer 2021)

Thank you for your interest in supporting Big City Mountaineers!

We are so excited that you've decided to explore the Board of Directors role at our organization. Below you'll find an overview of Big City Mountaineers (BCM), the Board of Directors role and responsibilities, the Board Terms/Participation and brief description of the letter of interest. Please write your letter of interest and send it to **Jessie George**, Nom/Gov Committee Chair at jcgeorge@georgiasown.org. If you have any questions or would like clarification, please don't hesitate to reach out.

The Organization

At Big City Mountaineers, we work alongside the transformative powers of Mother Nature to leave a lasting impact on the lives of youth from disinvested communities. By providing free, fully-outfitted, and professionally-led backcountry trips, we're able to give young people ages 8-18 the opportunity to connect with nature and more fully develop their strengths, skills, and resilience. Big City Mountaineers engages youth in 7 metropolitan areas across the country including Boston, Denver, Miami, Minneapolis, Portland (OR), the San Francisco Bay Area, and Seattle.

We partner with community-based youth organizations and caring adult volunteers who act as mentors in the field to help young people realize their potential. Our curriculum improves self-esteem, responsibility, decision-making abilities and communication skills in close to 1,000 youth annually. BCM measured our ability to grow the number of students reporting adequate or thriving levels of assets connected to Positive Values, Social Competency, Positive Identity, and Empowerment; and subsequently reduce the number of students reporting challenged or vulnerable levels of assets in those same categories.

In 2019, the last year we had a full program season:

- 75% of our students reported adequate and thriving levels of assets related to POSITIVE VALUES (Caring, Equality & Justice, Integrity, Honesty, Responsibility, Restraint). An increase of 15 points from the pre-trip survey. (64% national average for BIPOC identified youth).
- 74% of our students reported adequate and thriving levels of assets related to SOCIAL COMPETENCY (Planning and decision making, Interpersonal competence, Cultural competence, Resistance skills, Peaceful conflict resolution). An increase of 16 points from the pre-trip survey. (43% national average for BIPOC identified youth).
- 63% of our students reported adequate and thriving levels of assets related to POSITIVE IDENTITY (Personal power, Self-esteem, Sense of purpose, Positive view of personal future). An increase of 13 points from the pre-trip survey. (52% national average for BIPOC identified youth)
- 77% of our students reported adequate and thriving levels of assets related to EMPOWERMENT (Community values youth, Youth as resources, Service to others, Safety). An increase of 15 points from the pre-trip survey. (43% national average for BIPOC identified youth)

Over thirty years young, the BCM idea and organization has showed staying power beyond the norm, and has a stable operating budget to match. Founded by Jim Kern with initial funding from Jansport, BCM is seen and supported as a leader in providing mentoring experiences and nature-based programming for

deserving youth. The organization is well-known and highly regarded within the outdoor industry, and has received several awards, including the Inspiration Award for nonprofits at the Winter 2016 Outdoor Retailer show. Headquartered in Golden, CO, Big City Mountaineers is an organization of a dedicated team of full-time staff, seasonal trip instructors, and volunteers.

Coming out of the many challenges of 2020, BCM is beginning a new chapter of its existence under new leadership. We are looking to expand our reach and help even more youth from disinvested communities around the country; we are looking to expand our messaging beyond the outdoor industry, and raise more funds from foundations, corporate charitable giving campaigns, and cause related marketing efforts.

The Mission

Big City Mountaineers instills critical life skills in youth from disinvested communities through transformative wilderness mentoring experiences.

Board of Directors: Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Directors of Big City Mountaineers is charged with governance of the organization. The Board's principal responsibility is to ensure the long-term continuity and success of BCM. To accomplish this, the Board will maintain BCM's leadership among institutions of a similar kind, maintain BCM's credibility among youth program partners, and maintain its reputation and standing among the organization's private and public funders.

Governance can be further defined to encompass **three areas**: Leadership, Fiscal Responsibility and Fundraising.

Leadership

Board members will:

- Be passionate about the intersection of outdoor benefits/access for youth, youth development, and social justice.
- Commit to taking an active leadership role in the ongoing development of BCM's mission and programs, assessing its mission, shaping its strategic direction and creating policies to ensure the quality of its programs and further its mission and success.
- Participate in a collaborative process with BCM's Executive Director and staff for ongoing development and execution of strategic and operational plans, to incorporate programs, policy work partnerships, communications and fundraising.
- Act as an ambassador and advocate for Big City Mountaineers, always alert, aware and articulate in advancing opportunities to further BCM's mission and goals.
- Be accessible to the Executive Director, staff, and other Board members. Collaboration with staff and each other is key: board members are important ambassadors for BCM, and it is expected that Board members work together to open doors and identify potential areas of growth for BCM.
- Model leadership that advocates for and generates specific support that works toward eliminating race, socio-economic status, and other differences as predictors of success.
- Actively help cultivate an inclusive culture where all board members are encouraged to bring their perspectives, identity, and life experience to the board.
- Welcome and celebrate differences; encourage all board members to engage and invest, share power and responsibility for the organization's mission and the board's work.

- Commit to leveraging diversity, equity and inclusion to increase BCM’s relevance, reflecting the broadest interpretation of the community.
- Commit to viewing and making strategic and organizational decisions through a DEI lens.
- Attract, recommend and elect individuals to the Board who expand the diversity of the board, both in terms of demographics and skill base profile.
 - All Board members should be looking for potential new Board members. The Nomination and Governance Committee will vet new candidates, and asks that all Board members pass names along of potential candidates that fill an identified need.
 - The BCM Board is small, and each board member is selected for a specific skill set. Board members should all be actively thinking about their replacements, for when terms are up.

Fiscal Responsibility

Board members will:

- Oversee the financial operations of BCM by approving and monitoring annual budgets, ensuring that BCM operates on a fiscally responsible basis.
- Maintain a fiduciary responsibility to BCM. This means not only making sure BCM is spending the right amount, but spending correctly to meet its organizational mission and the goals.
- Establish the policies for and monitor BCM’s short- and long-term investments.
- Personally, contribute to Big City Mountaineers annually at a level that represents significant personal commitment to the organization. While there is **no** required set dollar contribution for BCM, each Board member should establish their own personal “give or get” number for the year, and make sure that happens. This does include a meaningful personal contribution from every Board member.

Outreach/ Fundraising

Board members will:

- Exhibit leadership in fundraising through personal gifts and the identification, cultivation and solicitation of other contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, organizations and government constituencies. Every Board member has a personal responsibility to raise money for BCM; the organization cannot succeed without that.
- Share resources and talents with BCM including expertise, guidance, contacts for financial support and contacts for in-kind contributions. As ambassadors for BCM, all Board members are expected to make connections even if not everyone can make a financial ask.
- Promote special fundraising events & projects, like Summit for Someone, through personal participation or encouraging others to participate. As part of their “give or get,” all Board members should actively promote the various programs we have, and serve as early supporters as BCM tries new things.
- Participate in one BCM overnight trip, expedition or SFS experience over the course of a three-year board term.

Board terms/participation

Board members are expected to:

- Serve one three-year term, renewable for one additional three-year term.
- Prepare for and attend four meetings annually; two in-person and two virtual, (and on an as-needed basis). The in-person meetings are generally in the fall and spring
- **Actively** serve on one or two Board Committee(s) (approximately two-four hours per month); participating on committee calls and possible work outside the call may be necessary. BCM is a

working Board; we need our Board members to bring their expertise to bear for the organization on a regular basis.

- Engage and respond promptly to discussions and requests from other Board members and the Executive Director.

Candidate Letter of Interest

Please write a letter to the board sharing the following:

- Relevant experience and/or employment (Please attach resume and LinkedIn Profile).
- Why are you interested in BCM?
- Your personal experience with nature, wilderness, and the outdoors; outdoor education; youth development; and/or passionate service to a non-profit organization.
- Specific commitments of time, talent or treasure that you will commit to BCM.
- Confirm that you have read and clearly understand the roles and responsibilities of the Board Members and believe you will be able to fulfill them for at least an initial term of three years.

Please send letter and resume to your primary BCM Board member contact and Nom/Gov committee Chair.